

March 30, 2018 Meeting Minutes

City Operations and Organization Workgroup

Call to Order at 8:10 a.m.

Members present: Alderman Kelly Russell (chair), Debra Borden, Dana French, Josh Russin, Gayon Sampson

Absent: Carl Pritchard

Approval of Meeting Minutes from March 16, 2018, with corrections sent by email.

Interview of Patti Mullins, Public Information Coordinator: She formulated her job's mission statement. She responds to all public information act requests, but is not sure that this is a good place to coordinate these requests. The City gets about 250 requests per year. Of that, 10% are complicated and/or large requests. Responding to them is heavily administrative, and tedious. She is not sure this function is appropriately housed with her, as it is more of an administrative role not a professional role. She would prefer to spend time promoting civic engagement, understanding and awareness of municipal business and functions, and promoting Frederick's image etc.

She supervises ~~2~~two audio visual staff. They spend most of their time covering meetings, but would like to spend more time on promotional projects. She feels they are performing well covering the essential functions of their jobs. She is not able to focus on the big picture functions. How much time do you spend on social media? She uses it daily to post on behalf of the city. She uses Facebook, Twitter, Instagram (less).

A director of communications would be useful in the city to be the spokesperson, and to craft the Mayor's message. Is reporting to the mayor directly right for her position? She doesn't think so. She doesn't think the mayor should have to make the smaller decisions, these should instead be handled by a deputy or a communications director.

Her goal has been to drive people to the city's website for information. The City does not have a webmaster, and her department takes care of the news flash portion of the site, but doesn't actually manage the site.

The City has explored civic engagement software but doesn't have anything like that currently.

Interview with Tracy Coleman, City Engineer:

She has been City Engineer for 4 years and reports to the Director of DPW. She previously worked for the City as assistant city engineer 20 years ago. She has 6 direct reports, supervises 13 engineers, plus a building inspections department with 16 employees, inspectors, and building code reviewers. She thinks her number of direct reports is appropriate. They help her plan and look at future projects. She works with a master planner to plan for roads and infrastructure. Her department also spend a lot of time on development review referrals, traffic and parking studies. She is also responsible for capital project development and management.

The projects department is housed under operations, so the project management position that Zack wants to add would be in that department. She would prefer the engineering department to be divided into development review and capital projects (short term v. long term). She doesn't think the project management position was included in the current budget proposal for the next fiscal year, but a new stormwater engineer position was included. A supervisor for development review and one for capital projects that report to her would allow her to focus on planning for the future and more effective supervision of the rest of the department.

Frederick is the biggest small town in Maryland. Yet, so many resources are not online. You can't apply for a permit online. We still do so many tasks by hand, and with paper. A decision has to be made from the top that the City must move into the 21st century in terms of technology. Once this is a priority, then we will need buy-in from stakeholders, and a plan for implementation it over a number of years.

How are promotions handled? Each area is so small so promotions are difficult and you have to wait for openings. The City has such a flat structure. Any thoughts on code enforcement? Permits Inspections and Enforcement was all one department 20 years ago and she thinks that works best. She doesn't know why Permits is under DPW. She currently likes reporting to Zack (the Director of DPW) but it used to be that the City Engineer reported directly to the Mayor. She works closely with Zack and the DPW operations department. Given Zack's scope of work she tries to only take important issues to him. They have quarterly deputy directors' meetings.

The reason that the structure of the city changed last time was personality driven and not for organizational effectiveness. The city has tended to develop managers not leaders.

She spends about 80% of her time dealing with operational matters, 15% focusing on the future, and 5% on process improvement. She thinks she needs to spend more time on the future and improving processes and delivery. She doesn't really have effective benchmarks or measurements of performance of her department.

Next steps:

Continue interviews with Directors

Public Guest/Comment: Phil LeBlanc

Meeting adjourned: 9:30 a.m.

Minutes prepared by Debra Borden